

The Hidden Love

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What's beaneath the surface?

The Hidden Love

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The Hidden Love

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It's been a year since the strike, and things were back to normal. The newsies were selling their papers, and the prices were back to the where they were. Everyone was happy again.

It was a few months before the one-year anniversary of the strike, and everyone wanted to celebrate. After getting together, they decided to have a big blow out. They wanted the party to be the best they've had in a long time, except that none of them had that kind of know how. There was only one person that did. Cathlyn Jones

She was a new newsie and had only been with the group for a few months. There were still trying to find a name for her because there were none that they could come up with that seemed to suit her.

So Jack and Spot went to ask her if she'd be willing to help. When they found her, she was on her bunk, reading her favorite book, A Little Princess. This was like the three millionth time she had read it, and it was getting rough around the edges.

Cathlyn was a little on the big side, but all the newsies liked her. She was bright, friendly and upbeat. Plus, she could hold up her own, if she was ever in a fight.

"Hey, Cathlyn!" Are you busy?" Jack asked.

"No, why?" She replied as she put a bookmark in her book, so she

could save her spot.

"We were wondering if you could help us with something," Spot inquired.

"Sure, what?"

"Well, you know that the one year anniversary is coming up, and we were wondering if you would help plan the party for it. We've heard that you are the best at these things," Spot told her.

She smiled. Rubbing her chin, deep in thought, she considered the request. She really wanted to do this. It sounded like it would be a lot of fun.

"Sure, I'll do it."

They both smiled, and looked like they were going to jump with joy. They both thought, 'Now we can have a great party.'

"Ok," Jack said when they had finally calmed down. "Are you going to need any help with this?"

"Yeah, I'm going to need someone because I don't really know what you guys like. I have only been here few months, after all."

"Alright. Spot? Any chance you can help her? I would, but Sarah's been breathing down my neck to spend more time with her."

"Sure, but that means Cathlyn's probably going to want to stay in Brooklyn till everything's settled."

Turning to her, he asked,

"Is that alright? You can sell while you're there."

"Yeah, that'll be just fine,"

Later that day, Cathlyn was back at the lodging house, as she packed up her stuff. It didn't take long for her to pack, since she didn't have that much stuff. Pretty much everything fit in one small bag that she has had since she left home. Her parents died when she was 15, and there was nowhere else for her to go except the orphanage, and she was definitely not doing that. She's heard all the stories about kids being abused while living there.

She had just gotten finished packing when all the guys came in. They were all singing and yelling. They were her best friends. Her best friend out of the whole group was Race. He was the one who had introduced her to all the guys, and helped make her feel welcome. When he came in, he noticed that her bag was sitting on her bed, and that she was putting stuff in it.

"Hey, Cathlyn. Where ya going?"

"Oh, didn't Jack tell you?"

"No, tell us what?"

"I'm going to live in Brooklyn for a while."

Before she could continue, Race interrupted with a quick.

"Why? Did something happen?"

"No, no. Nothing happened. Jack and Spot asked if I could help with the anniversary party for the strike. They knew that I have a knack for those kinds of things, so they asked, and I agreed."

"Ok, I understand that part, but why are you going to Brooklyn? Wouldn't it be easier to plan it all here?"

Sighing, she sat on her bed, and motioned for Race to sit. When he did, she continued to tell him,

"It probably would be easier, but since Spot agreed to help me with it, he thought it would be easier to work on it there. That way, after we're done selling papers that day, we can spend the evenings planning for the party instead of spending it walking the streets of New York. Does that make any sense?"

"Yeah, I guess. I just don't want you to get hurt. You're my best friend. I don't want anything to happen to you," he said as he placed his hand over hers as a token their friendship.

She smiled, and patted his hand. There was nothing he wouldn't do for her. Even if it meant taking on the most famous newsie. Shaking her head, she told him,

"Oh, come on, Race. You should know me better than that. I know how to take care of myself. And yes, I remember what they say about Spot. I'll watch my back, and I promise not to get hurt."

He smiled, and you could tell he felt better. Just by those words had put him at ease. He patted her hand, and stood up, so he could clean himself up. She watched him as he grabbed his towel, from the end of his bed, and headed for the bathroom. Shaking her head, she finished, what little there was of, her packing.

Just as she got finished, she heard someone pounding up the stairs, and she looked up. When the sound reached the top of the stairs, the footsteps headed for the door, and Spot entered the room. Everyone said their hellos, and they talked with him for a bit.

While they were talking, Cathlyn just sat on her bed, watching him. Even though, she had seen him a lot since she became a newsie, every time she saw Spot, her breathe got caught in her throat. So much that there were times when she had trouble breathing. He turned around and flashed her one of his killer smiles.

He walked over and stood by her bed. As he sat down, he asked,

"Are ya ready?"

"Hold on, let me check one last time," she replied, as she searched through her things one last time. Once she had looked in the last spot, she turned back to Spot, and said,

"Yeah, everything's here."

Jack must have told everyone because as Spot and Cathlyn were headed for the door, everyone yelled their good-byes and good lucks. Appreciating the good wishes, they both waved, and walked out the door and towards Brooklyn. Cathlyn's home for the next few months.

An hour later, they reached the Brooklyn lodging house. It looked a lot like the one in Manhattan, only it was a tad bit more run down, and it was by the river. They both entered the house, getting greetings from everyone who was already back from their day of selling.

This was Cathlyn's first visit to the Brooklyn house and she was shy. She was great once she got to know people, but when she meets them for the first time, she tends to get a little shy. Spot must have sensed this because he gently placed his hand on her back, and steered towards everyone. When they got to everyone, he did a series of introduces, and they greeted her warmly, some of them shaking her hand.

Looking around, she saw that there were no girls. Making a note to herself to ask Spot later about this, she looked at Spot, and asked,

"Is there any place I can put my bag?"

Scratching his head, he looked towards the front desk, and sent the old man behind it an inquiring look. "Hey, Jesse, are there any more beds left upstairs?"

"Nope, sorry. Chetman over there took the last one yesterday," he said as he pointed to one of the newsies closest to him. "Remember?"

"Oh, yeah, that's right," he said, slapping his forehead slightly.

The mentioned newsie looked a little guilty and told Spot,

"She can have my bed. I can sleep on the floor."

"No, Chetman, that's alright. That's your bed, and you're going to keep it. So don't worry about it."

Chetman looked relieved, yet was concerned as to where Cathlyn was going to sleep. There definitely weren't anymore beds, and the floor was definitely not fit for anyone to sleep on.

"Then where am I going to sleep?" She asked, getting a little worried about the situation. "Down here on the couch?"

"No, way. You're not sleeping on that couch. It's as hard as a rock."

She looked at him with an inquiring look that said, 'Oh, really? And how do you know.'

"Believe me, I had to when a skunk got in here last summer."

She smiled at the image that went through her head. Shaking her head to keep from bursting out loud, she sighed and asked,

"Ok, if the couch is out of the question, then where, pray tell, will I sleep?"

Rubbing his chin, as he thought, he remembered that there was any extra bed in the house, although it was rarely used. Sighing, he realized that this was the only solution to their problem.

"Well, there is another bed that you can sleep in, but I don't think you're going to like where it is."

"It can't be that bad," she commented. She smiled and asked, "Why where is it? On the roof?"

"No," he paused, not sure if he wanted to say this, especially with all the guys around. Deciding not to worry about it, he continued, "umâ€¦it's in my room."

When he had told her where the bed was, all the guys started hooting and hollering. After a minute of this, he gave the guys one of his looks, and they quickly settled down, but there was still and occasional snicker amongst the group.

"Did I hear you right? In your room?"

"Yeah, is that a problem?"

"No, no. No problem here" she stammered her words.

"Alright, lets get your stuff upstairs and get you settled," he said as he headed towards the stairs.

Cathlyn stayed in her place as she watched him go to the stairs. She was a little dazed at what happened. 'Am I doing the right thing? Even though I like this guy, should I share his room with him?'

Spot realized that he was not being followed, and he turned back towards her. Beckoning her, he asked,

"Are you coming?" Or are you going to stay down here?"

"Yeah, I'm coming," she said, grabbing her bag from the floor, where she had dropped it, and followed him up the stairs.

When they arrived at his room, Cathlyn noticed that it was the first room at the top of the stairs. Spot opened the door, and stepped back, so she could go in. Smiling to herself, she walked in and started looking around. When she had gone in, he followed, shutting the door behind him.

When Cathlyn saw Spot's room, she wasn't surprised to see how sparse it was. After all, Newsies don't make a whole lot of money. There were two beds, a small dresser with a mirror, and two end tables.

Both of the end tables were next to a bed, which she assumed was Spot's bed. She saw him grab one of the tables, and lugged it next to other bed. That was to be her bed for the next few months.

Setting her bag on that bed, she started unpacking her stuff, which was very little. While she was unpacking, she noticed that Spot disappeared through a door, and she figured that it was a closet or something. When she reached the door, and looked in, she saw that it was a bathroom. 'Great,' she thought. Then she smiled, 'Now I don't have to share a bathroom with thirty other guys, just Spot.'

Heading back to her bed, she put her hand in her bag, and pulled out the last item in it. It was a framed picture. It was a picture of her family. She was an only child, and they were all she had. This was the last picture she had of her family. It was taken shortly before they were killed.

She was still looking at the picture when Spot came back into the room. He walked over, and looked over her shoulder and saw the picture. He saw that the little girl in the picture, and saw that it was her.

"Are they your parents?"

She jumped a little when he spoke because she didn't hear him come in. Bringing her hand to her chest, she looked up at him,

"Huh?"

"Are they your parents?" He repeated his question.

"Oh, yeah," she said sadly, turning back to the picture.

Sitting, next to her, on her bed, he asked,

"What happened?"

"One day, while I was out to get something, I don't even remember what it was. Anyway, while I was gone, my house was broken into, and both of my parents were killed. I never got to say goodbye or anything."

"Well, I know it doesn't sound like much, but if you ever need someone to talk to, I'm here. You can talk to me."

She smiled, and told him,

"Thanks, I really appreciate it. I'll keep that in mind when I need it. I don't right now, but thanks."

He nodded in understanding, and stood up, yawning along the way. Looking down at her, he told her,

"We had better turn in. Tomorrow is a selling day, after all."

"Alright," she said as she got up off the bed.

Going into the bedroom, she got ready for bed. When she came out,

Spot was already in bed, waiting for her, so he could turn out the light. Getting in bed, she got herself settled and laid back in the bed. Saying their good nights, the light went out and they went to sleep.

When Spot woke there was nothing, but silence. As he sat up, he heard running water coming from the bathroom. Seeing that Cathlyn's bed was empty, so he knew that it was her in the bathroom. Going into the bathroom, he saw no one, but still heard the water. Then, he realized that the sound was coming from the shower.

So he wouldn't scare her, he made some noise while he was getting himself cleaned up. He made enough noise that it would wake the dead. He was just about finished when he heard the water turn off. He was about to turn to leave, when the door to the shower opened and she came out.

All she was wearing was a towel. This really made him go for a loop. Women normally don't show off that much skin, and this was the most he had seen. He realized that he was starring, so he turned his head, while his head turned a bright red.

Cathlyn either must not have noticed that he was in the room, or she was used to having guys in the bathroom. He was hoping it was the first option. She went about her routine of getting ready for her day. Since it seemed that she didn't see him, every so often, Spot took the risk of peeking at her.

Finally, Spot figured he should get his tail out of there before she did notice him. So he left the room, and finished getting his things around. A minute later, Cathlyn came in, buttoning the last buttons of her vest while humming a little tune. Strangely, it sounded familiar to him, but he couldn't place it.

She smiled when she Spot, and said,

"Good morning. Have a nice night?"

"Yes, actually I did. The best I've had in a while."

"Great," she smiled with a mischievous glimmer in her eyes. "We wouldn't want you to fall asleep on the job, now. Would we?"

He smiled, and shook his head slightly. "No, we wouldn't."

Sitting on the bed, she started to comb out her, still damp, hair. While she was taking care of her hair, she asked him,

"Who will I be selling with today? Do you know?"

"Actually, I don't. We got in so late last night that I never got a chance to set anyone up with you. They're probably all taken for the day." Noticing how late it was getting, he walked over to the door, and opened it. "It's almost time to go anyway. Maybe there's a chance that someone is still left who needs a partner. Are you ready?"

Putting the last pin in her hair, she grabbed her hat and headed

towards the door. When she reached him, she said,

"Alright, lets go."

They headed downstairs, and everyone was milling around the lobby, waiting for Spot to come down. No one left for the center until Spot had given the okay. They all stood from their seats when they saw Spot and Cathlyn come down the stairs. When they both reached the bottom of the stairs, he asked the group,

"While Cathlyn's here, she's going to need a selling partner. She doesn't know Brooklyn that well, and we don't need her getting lost. Is there anyone left who still needs a partner?"

He looked around the room, but there were no volunteers, not even from Chetman, the newest newsie. 'Everyone has a partner it seems,' he thought.

"No one?" he asked, in case he was wrong. Again, no one raised their hand.

Sighing, he turned to her and she was a little distraught because she knew, as well as he did that she couldn't sell by herself. It wasn't safe or wise.

"Would you like to sell with my today?"

This surprised her a great deal. It's not everyday that the Great Spot Conlon asked someone, instead of telling them, anything. It took her a minute to come up with an answer, but when she did come up with an answer, she nodded, to afraid to speak.

He nodded to her, and turned to the guys before them. Looking at them, he could tell they were anxious to go. Finally, they heard the words they were waiting for,

"Alright, boys. Head on out."

They all cheered, and left the building as fast they could. The day was just starting and they had to get their papers sold as soon as they could. When everyone was gone, he and Cathlyn walked out the door together, towards the center, with smiles on their faces.

That night, everyone was back from their day, and they were all exhausted. Everyone was in their room, just relaxing from the long day. Spot and Cathlyn were also relaxing in their room, while they started planning the anniversary party. Sure, it was months away, but there were going to be times when they wouldn't get a chance to get any work on it done. They needed to do what work they could, when they could.

"Ah, come on Cathlyn, we don't want red, white and blue paper all over the place," Spot moaned from where he was sitting on his bed. She was sitting on her bed with a sheet of paper in her lap. "That's for the Forth of July. Besides, where are we going to get that kind of money? The guys can't pitch in a whole lot of money, you know."

"Alright, do you have any better ideas?" Asking him, when she looked up from the paper. She had a better idea, but she wanted to see him suffer a little as he tried to come up with one. He became frustrated when he couldn't come up with anything better. A small growling could be heard from him, and she smiled.

"Guess not," he said with a defeated look.

"Well, how about this for an idea?" She asked as she got up off the bed, and started walking around the room. "We could have posters all over the room with some of the stuff we call out from the paper. We can have the guys turn in their favorite headlines, and we'll pick some."

Looking at him, she could tell he liked that idea, so she continued on, "Maybe we could also have some banners made up. What do you think of that?"

"I like it," he told her. "That's a lot better than other idea you had."

"Oh, geez, thanks," she said sarcastically, but with a smile.

"Oh, you know what I mean. None of the guys are into all that fancy stuff, but this idea works."

He started rattling off more ideas, and would have probably gone on forever if she hadn't interrupted him.

"I do have one more idea."

"What?"

"A piñata."

"What's a piñata?"

"Don't tell me you don't know what a piñata is?" He shook his head, and she went on to tell him. "A piñata is an object made of paper mache and chicken wire, and it's filled with an assortment of things. Candy, small toys, maybe even a little money."

"Ok, so what's the point of having these piñatas?"

"I don't know the whole story behind them, but piñatas are used at celebration, and when it comes time for it, someone is blind folded, turned around three times, and then they are let loose searching for it. Only when they're searching for it, they have a big stick, and a rope hangs the piñata, overhead. The person with the stick tries to hit it, and break it open, then when it's opened, everyone jumps in for the prizes."

"Neat," he said with a big smile. You could definitely tell he liked this idea. Now he can beat up something, and no one will get hurt and he won't get in trouble. Clutching his hands together, he got a mischievous look in his eyes, and you could tell he was up to something.

Even though she had just moved in the previous night, she knew that

look to well. Every time he got into a scheme with one of his friends, he got that same look. Almost like a cat watching a bird just ahead, just ready to pounce.

"Don't go getting that look," She said as she wagged her finger at him. "You won't be able to play with the piñata until the party."

"Why?"

"Cause we'll only have money to buy the makings for it only once," she said by pointing up one finger, so she could make her point. "If you go messing with it, then there won't be one for the others to play with."

"Oh, alright," he mumbled, giving in. He hated giving into anyone, especially to a girl.

"Thanks."

Yeah, yeah."

They heard Jesse come up the stairs, so they knew it was about time for bed. Grabbing what they needed, they headed into the bathroom, so they could get ready for bed. While they were getting ready, Spot couldn't help it when he kept looking over at Cathlyn. He still remembered that morning very vividly, and he started to feel something go through him. This was something he couldn't explain, not even to himself.

Finishing up, they both headed for their beds. Cathlyn decided to read before she went to be. So she lighted a candle, and put it on her end table. Settling herself in her bed, she pulled out her book, and started to read. This was something to get her mind off of other thoughts. Thoughts that she shouldn't be thinking about.

An hour later, she shut her book, and set it on the table. Stretching her arms over her head, she looked over at Spot's bed, and saw he was sound asleep. He was partially covered with his blanket, and he looked like a little boy when he was asleep. Getting out of bed, she walked over, and fixed the blanket around him.

When she had gotten the blanket settled around him, he mumbled something in his sleep, and opened his eyes. For a moment, she stood rooted to her place. Nothing in her could make her move from her spot. He laid there staring at her, and she couldn't breathe. Not even if her life depended on it. Then he closed his eyes, and settle back to sleep.

Finally, she was able to move. She settled herself back to her bed, and tried to go to sleep. It was hard for her because to many thoughts were going through her head. Absolutely nothing would get her to sleep. After thrashing around in her bed, she was able to get to sleep, only because of it was from exhaustion.

THE NEXT DAY

Jesse came up the stairs, banging on Spot's door while on his way to the bunkroom. He woke up mumbling something that sounded like a whole lot of gibberish. He rolled himself out of bed, and got himself

ready. When he came out, Cathlyn was still sound asleep.

'Man, she must be a sound sleeper. I wonder how well that worked in Manhattan.'

Kneeling next to her bed, he shook her shoulder to wake her up, and she just mumbled something, and turned over on her side. He shook her again, harder this time. This time, she did wake up, and brought herself up on her elbows, as she looked around the room, not quite sure what was going on

"Huh? What happened?"

"Time to get up."

Deciding it was a dream, she rolled back on her side, and tried to get some more sleep. He shook his head, and started to shake her even harder. This still didn't wake her up, so he grabbed the ends of the mattress and yanked it off the frame.

'If anything this should wake her up,' he thought.

When the mattress left the frame, it hit the floor with a thud. This time she did wake up, and sat up, this time fully awake. She stood up, and looked at Spot, square in the eye.

"What did you do that for?"

"It's time to wake up."

"Wasn't there a better way to wake me up other than dropping me on the floor?"

"There probably was except that none of them would worked."

"Sure," she said in disbelief.

Grabbing her clothes, she stomped for the bathroom, and quickly got ready. Not speaking to Spot, she ran down the stairs until it was time to go. Again, everyone had their partners for the day, so she had to wait for Spot to come down.

When Spot came down, all the guys were silent. They knew something was wrong just by looking at Cathlyn. He nodded, and everyone left for the center. Cathlyn stayed seated where she was on the counter, and didn't budge until Spot came over to her.

"Cathlyn?"

"Yes," she said coolly.

"Shouldn't we be going?"

Just by looking at her, he could tell she was still angry about that morning. She jumped off the counter, and headed out the door without looking or talking to him. He followed her, and they headed towards the center. Even though she was not speaking to him, she got in line behind Spot, along with the other guys.

Once everyone had their papers, they all left, calling out the day's

headlines. Cathlyn was not that far behind them, and Spot had to run to catch up with her. He kept calling her, but she didn't answer back. Finally, they stopped at the center of Brooklyn, and started calling out their headlines.

Over the course of the morning, Spot couldn't help, but think about that morning.

'All I was trying to do was wake her up. She should know by now how impatient I could be.' Looking over at her, she was handing a newspaper over to someone, smiling to them, and taking the money for the paper. For some reason, he wished that she would smile at him like that, all bright and sunny like. She looked over his way, and immediately frowned, then looked away.

He felt said, and thought,

'What am I going to do? How are we going to plan this party if she won't even speak to me?'

He was able to answer his question because by that time a rush of people enter their area, and he tried to sell his papers.

By lunchtime, the crowds had died down, and it was time to eat. Cathlyn headed over to a nearby restaurant without talking to Spot. Following her, he watched her walk in, and sit at an empty booth towards the back. Her head was buried in a menu as she tried to decide what she wanted. Rooted in her place, all he could do was stare at her through the glass.

Shaking himself, he walked through the door, and headed for her booth. Her head was still buried in the menu, so he didn't see him until he sat across from her in the booth. She looked up, and scowled when she saw who it was. The waiter walked up to their table, and waited for their order. Cathlyn looked up long enough to say,

"Roastbeef sandwich and a glass of water."

The waiter looked at Spot, and he said,

"Same thing."

The waiter nodded, and walked away as he wrote on his notepad. Spot just sat there, looking at Cathlyn as she kept her head buried. Finally, he got to impatient, and he pulled the menu out of her hands. The scowl returned to her face as she wrapped her arms across her chest and leaned back in her seat.

"What do you want?"

"I want to say that I'm sorry for what I did this morning, but it was the only way to get you out of bed. If I wouldn't have, you would have made no money, and I doubt you want to sleep out on the steam grates tonight."

"No, I definitely don't want that. I've done that before and they are not the least bit comfortable."

"So you see, I was kind of doing you a favor."

"A favor, sure, but there had to be a better way to get me out of bed."

"Didn't we go over that already? I tried to wake up gently, but all you wanted to do was sleep."

"Yeah, I know," she sighed, rubbing her eyes. She was still somewhat tired. "I probably shouldn't have read for so long."

"Maybe, but then I wouldn't have had all my wonderful fun this morning," he said with a smile.

She laughed, and it seemed that her mood seemed to pass over.

Lunch was now over, and it was time to return to the center for more papers. They still had to sell to the afternoon crowds. After they paid for their food, they walked out the door, and this time, they walked to the center together. Getting their papers, they sought out to sell them while talking to each other in between spots.

Once the day was over, everyone headed their merry ways. Many went out to have fun with their friends, while the rest headed back to the lodging house to relax. In the main bunkroom, the guys were playing a lively game of poker, and someone had just won a very wealthy hand. While in Spot's room, he and Cathlyn were also relaxing, while they did some more planning for the party.

"Alright, we have everything decided for the party except what time we should have it," Spot pointed out, when he looked at their list.

"Well," Cathlyn said as she moved around on her bed, so that she was on her side. "How about we have it about seven? That way everyone can still get some papers sold for that day, and they can still go to the party."

"That would work, except that it's going to be pretty late when it gets over."

"If the guys are going to work the next day, then they'll probably try and leave at a decent time, won't they?"

"Yeah, probably, but knowing these guys, they'll probably want to stay at the party as long as possible. Alright? Cathlyn?"

While Spot was talking, Cathlyn had fallen asleep. She was very tired, especially since she hadn't gotten much sleep the night before. He smiled, and shook his head. Getting out of bed, he walked over to hers and covered her with her blanket. Kneeling down before her, he gently stroked her cheek. When he did, she sighed happily in her sleep.

'She must be having a nice dream,' he thought.

Getting up, he got himself ready and he went to bed.

THE NIGHT OF THE PARTY

It was now three months later, and it was time for the party. Spot, Cathlyn, and many others were running around Medda's as they decorated it for the party. It was almost time, and they had to hurry. Finally everything was ready, and everyone left for home, so they could get ready.

Spot and Cathlyn hurried back to the house, and started getting ready. Spot decided to get ready in the bunkroom, while Cathlyn got ready in his room. He left with all his clothes, and she started getting ready. Going through what clothes she had, she decided to where her best dress. It was a bright blue dress with sparkles all over the skirt. This was her favorite dress.

Laying it on the bed, she went into the bathroom for a nice, long shower. It was nice after a long day. Very relaxing. Sighing, she immersed herself in the warm water, and made herself all clean. When she was done, she stepped out of the shower, and made herself ready.

Running into the other room, she grabbed her dress from the bed. Before she could turn around, she heard a noise behind her. Turning a little, she saw that Spot was standing behind her. He was there, holding his shirt when he should have been wearing it. All she could do was stare at him. This was definitely the most she has seen of him.

Then he turned around and headed for the door. It was then that he saw her. He stopped head in his spot. All he could do was stare, and the same was with Cathlyn. They stood like that for a minute or so, and finally came back to their senses. They both blushed, and went about their business. Spot left the room with his shirt, and Cathlyn walked back into the bathroom with her dress.

Later on, everyone was waiting downstairs because they were going to walk to the party together. Spot was leaning against the counter that was at the base of the stairs. He was waiting for Cathlyn to get downstairs because she agreed to go with him to the party, and he was getting more impatient by the minute.

He heard something on the steps, and turned to see who it was. When he saw Cathlyn, he was so surprised that he fell to the floor. When he hit floor, she laughed a little. This was something she definitely wasn't expecting. He pulled himself up, and smiled at her.

'She's gorgeous. I've never seen her in a dress before,' he thought.

She was wearing the blue dress with the sparkles on the skirt. Her hair had been made up into a French braid that glistened in the light. Reaching the bottom of the stairs, she smiled at Spot, and asked,

"So you like it?"

"Oh, yes. It looks great."

Everyone was getting impatient, and they wanted to leave. Spot gave them the leave to go, and they all walked out the door with their dates. When they were all gone, Spot offered his arm to Cathlyn, and she accepted it with smile. They headed on their way for the party.

By the time they reached the party, everything was in full swing, and everyone was having a great time. When Spot and Cathlyn walked in, they saw that most of the newsies from the surrounding areas were there. They both found a table with some of the Manhattan newsies, and they all told them that it was a great party.

"This is the best party we've had in a long time," Jack told her. "It's even better than the strike rally."

"I'm not so sure about that," Cathlyn commented. She had heard about the rally from everyone over the last few months. This was one of the best ideas she's had for a party, but she wasn't very sure if it was a good idea. There were a lot of parties that seemed better than hers.

"Well, it is. You can take my word for it," Spot told her. "All we had was singing at the party. At this one we have a lot more."

Cathlyn wasn't sure why, but this made her feel better, just because it came from Spot. She smiled and immediately felt more relaxed. Leaning against her chair, she grabbed a drink, and took a sip. Looking out on the dance floor, she saw that everyone was dancing. Sighing, she returned her gaze back to the table, and everyone was gone, except for Spot. He was still sitting at the table. He had seen her gazing at the dance floor.

Standing up, he went to the other side of her, and bowed. When he came back up, he held out his hand, and asked,

"Would you care to dance?"

She nodded, and took his hand as he led her to the floor. By the time they reached the floor, the previous song was over, and a nice slow song replaced it. They started dancing, and neither of them talked. They just danced in the blissful silence.

Sighing, she placed her head on his chest, and closed her eyes. Still neither of them speak through the entire song. They just dance back and forth to the lovely music. Just before the song ended, she looked back up at him, and all thoughts went out of her head.

At that moment, Spot lowered his head, and gently kissed her on the lips. When he pulled away, she was completely dazed. Coming around, she stood up on her toes, and kissed him. He wrapped his arms around her, and the kiss went deeper. It seemed like an eternity until they decided to come up for air. Now both of them were a little dazed. So they went back to their table, and everyone had decided to return to their tables at that time, and they were all smiling. They had all seen Spot and Cathlyn on the floor, and were all happy for them.

As the evening went on, everyone had more and more fun. Everyone ate, talked to their friends, and danced some more. As the evening went on, people started leaving little by little. It was getting late, and most of them still had to sell in the morning. Finally, Spot and Cathlyn decided to leave. They walked back to the house, talking and laughing about various things.

Running upstairs, Spot started getting his stuff ready for bed. When he started for the bathroom, Cathlyn came out and she was dressed in her regular clothes. Stopping in his tracks, Spot turned around, and asked,

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, didn't you know? Jack and the guys asked me to come over after the party."

Dropping his clothes on a chair next to him, he walked over to where she was sitting on the bed, and said,

"No you're not. It's too dark for someone to be walking outside alone."

When she was finished putting her shoes on, she stood up and looked at him,

"Oh, really? Just so you know, I can do whatever I want, and you can't stop me."

"Oh, yes I can."

"Oh? And how are you planning on doing that? Huh? Are you going to strap me to the bed, so I can't go anywhere?"

"No, I'm going to do this," he wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her. This kiss was different from the one at the party. It was filled with passion, and love. At first, she didn't know what to make of it, so she fought him, and tried to get away. However, she finally gave up and accepted the kiss with as much as he gave.

Spot gently pushed her back on the bed, and sat next to her, all the while still kissing her. She wrapped her arms around her neck, and started pulling his shirt off of him. He pulled away and looked into her eyes. He must have found his answer because started to kiss her again, as he started to unbutton her shirt, and pushed her back, gently on the bed.

THE NEXT MORNING

When Cathlyn woke up the next morning, she sighed in pure happiness. The party that she had planned was a complete success, and she had gotten a kiss from the boy she'd been in love with since she became a newsie. Sitting up in bed, she realized that someone's arms were wrapped around her, and when she looked, she saw they were Spot's. A thought of pure confusion filled her mind.

'What the heck is going on here?'

Then with a flash, everything that happened after the party hit her

with a full force. Full fledged panic flooded her mind when she realized what she had just did.

'Oh, no?! What am I going to do?' She thought, then she quickly decided. 'I have to get out of here.'

Quickly and silently, she got dressed, and packed up her things. Taking one last look at Spot, she sighed. She didn't really want to go, but she didn't know what would happen if she stayed. Just before she left the room, she walked back in, and grabbed a picture off of Spot's dresser.

It was a picture that was taken a month ago with both of them sitting on the railing of the Brooklyn Bridge. They were both laughing about something. She couldn't remember what. This was one thing she wanted to remember Spot by because she didn't know if she was ever going to come back again.

Finally, she walked out of the room, and headed for the train station to catch the next train to her aunt's house in Ithaca.

TEN MINUTES LATER

Spot woke up not long after Cathlyn had left, and he was confused when he found the bed empty. Normally, when he went to bed with someone, she was there the next morning. He sat up from the bed, and looked around the room. He still couldn't find her, so he looked in the bathroom. No Cathlyn.

Now he was getting worried. Grabbing his clothes, he quickly got himself dressed, and ran down the stairs. Jesse was behind the desk when Spot reached the lobby. Still, he was looking hurriedly for Cathlyn, and finding her nowhere. He ran up to the desk, and asked,

"Hey, Jesse, have you seen Cathlyn? I can't find her anywhere."

"Yeah, I saw her. She left about ten minutes ago."

"Why? Do you know where she went?"

"No, I don't know where she went, but I don't think she's going to be coming back."

"And why do you think that?"

"Well, she had her bag with her, and normally people who are out only for the day, don't take their bags with them."

Sliding against the wall of the counter, he groaned, and said to himself,

"Oh, now. Where could she have gone?"

Then he heard Jesse say something that changed his thoughts.

"Maybe she went back to the Manhattan house. Wasn't she just here only to help you plan the for the party?"

He stood up and looked at him,

"You know, you're right. Thanks, Jesse. I'll run on over, and see if that's where she went.

Waving goodbye to Jesse, he ran out the door, and headed on over to Manhattan. When he arrived there, everyone was already at the center, and they were getting their papers. Jack was leaning against the dock, reading his paper, when Spot ran in.

Jack was surprised when Spot came running in because he doesn't normally come in this early in the morning when he comes over. So when he came running in that morning, Jack started to worry.

Spot was exhausted when he arrived at the center. He had run all the way from Brooklyn, so he was exhausted. Before he could talk to Jack, he had to rest. When he was able to talk normal enough to talk, he asked,

"Did Cathlyn come back this morning?"

"No, why? Is something wrong?" Jack questioned

"I don't know," Spot said.

"Why would something be wrong?"

"Well, when I woke up this morning, she wasn't in her bed. And since the party was over, I thought she might have come back this morning."

"Nope, she's not here."

"Hey, Race?"

He walked over, and replied,

"Yeah?"

"Have you seen Cathlyn?"

"No, why? Isn't she suppose to be in Brooklyn?"

"Yeah, she was, but when I woke up this morning, she wasn't in her bed."

"What? What did you do to her?" He asked as he looked at Spot.

"I did nothing."

"Ok, whatever you say."

"What we need to do is get a search party going," Race ordered.

While they were getting people around, everyone in line overheard their conversation. One newsie, in particular, had something to tell him. It was one of the younger newsies, Snitch. So he walked up to them, and got their attention. When they were turned around looking at him, he asked,

"Where you talking about Cathlyn?"

"Yeah, we were. Do you know anything?" Spot asked.

"Well, I saw her this morning."

"What? Where is she?" Spot asked as he jumped from his seat, and stood in front of the newsie.

"I saw her at the trainyards. She was getting on a train, and it looked like she was in a big hurry."

"Do you know where she went?"

"Uh, yeah. I think I caught the name. Ithaca?"

"She must be going to see her aunt," Jack told him when Spot slumped to the ground.

"Her aunt?" He asked when he looked up at him.

"Yeah," Jack told him. "Cathlyn told us that since her family got killed, her aunt was her only family. She didn't want to stay with her aunt because she wanted to live a free life."

"Oh, man. Why'd she have to leave now?"

"I don't know. I'm sorry," he could tell that Cathlyn's unexplained leaving really hurt him, but not just because of the normal reasons. Jack could tell that Spot was starting to love her, and it hurt that he could tell her.

Spot got up without talking to any of the guys, and walked slowly out of the center. This was something he wanted to deal with on his own, and he couldn't do it with other people around. So Spot went to one place where he could think it through. The roof of the lodging house in Brooklyn.

When he arrived at the roof, he sat on an old discarded bench that had somehow gotten its way up there. Whenever he had something he really needed to think about, he went there, and most of the time, he was able to figure out his problems. Laying on the bench, he looked up at the sky, and tried to make sense of what happened with him and Cathlyn.

Normally he wouldn't have gone for a girl like Cathlyn, but there was just something about her that drew him to her. He didn't know what, but something was there. Now he'd lost it, and he didn't know why. Suddenly, he started crying, and he couldn't stop. After a few minutes, the tears subsided, and then he was tired. Falling asleep, he had dreams of Cathlyn, and what their life might have been together.

A YEAR AND A HALF LATER

Cathlyn had been gone for a while, and Spot had never been the same. He never sold as many papers as he did before, and he always wanted

to be alone. Finally, Jack had gotten him over to the Manhattan house for a night of poker. They were playing in the lobby area, next to the fire, because it was too cold up in the bunkroom.

Spot was playing a half-hearted game when they all heard the front door open. Looking up, they saw it was a beautiful woman with long blond hair, and a baby girl in her arms. They all stood up from their forgotten game, and walked over to her, except for Spot. He just sat there.

It was Cathlyn. She all smiled at those she'd remembered, and those she did not, and they smiled in return. When she looked at Spot, she was saddened a little because of what she had done to him, but hopefully, she would be able to change all that.

"Well, hello beautiful. What can we do for you?" One newsie commented after another.

"Hello to you, too," she said as she dropped her bag on the floor.

All the newsies gather around her except the one she needed to talk to. She kept trying to break through when she was picked up by two powerful arms, and spun around. When she was put down, she saw that it was Jack. After Jack had put her down, Race hugged her. Jack and Race had just come downstairs when she came in, and they recognized her immediately. They were so glad to see her.

"Where'd did you go? Race asked.

"Yeah, you left without telling anyone," Jack commented.

"Can I talk to you later about this? Could you hold Sherrie?" she asked as she handed her to Race. Before she broke into the crowd, she said, "I need to talk to someone."

"I don't know what you can do for me, but I know what a Mr. Spot Conlon can do," she said loudly as though talking to the newsies, but so that Spot could hear her.

When he heard his name, Spot's head perked up, and looked at the lady. Something inside him wouldn't shake away the fact that he'd seen her before. So he walked up to her, and looked at her.

She smiled, and asked, "Spot? Don't you remember me?"

"No, I don't. I've never seen you in my life."

Cathlyn looked sad for a second, but then decided for one last grasp of hope. Getting her bag from the floor, she opened it up and pulled something out. She handed it to him, and said,

"Maybe this will make you remember."

He looked at the picture. It was the picture of him and Cathlyn on the Brooklyn Bridge railings. They were having fun that day. For some reason, she looked a lot like the woman that was standing right in front of him. Looking away from the picture, he looked in her eyes, and took a startled step back. Then he whispered,

"Cathlyn?"

She nodded her head

He looked her over in shock. She had changed since she left. Now she was even more beautiful then before. Wrapping his arms around her, he gave her a big hug. When he released her, he asked,

"Where did you go?"

She looked around the room, and saw that all the newsies were listening on their conversation. Returning her look on Spot, she suggested,

"Why don't we go somewhere else and talk?"

He nodded, and they both went upstairs. When they reached the bunkroom, they each sat on a bunk facing each other. Before Spot could say a word, Cathlyn started to tell him why she left.

When she was done telling him why she'd left, Spot suddenly got up from the bed, and started pacing the room. Finally, Cathlyn asked,

"Well?"

"Oh, geez, Cathlyn, why didn't you tell me how you felt? I would have never gone that far if I had know you were scared about it."

"I didn't know that I felt that way until the next morning, and I didn't know what to do. So I just left."

"I figured that much out. Do you know what I did when I realized that you were gone? Huh?"

"I don't know. What?"

"I searched everywhere. I even went all the way to Manhattan to see if you were there. There was a thought I had that maybe you had gone back there that morning."

"And I wasn't there," she said as she looked down.

"No, you weren't there," he said as he came up to her, and knelt before her. Pulling her chin up so she would look at him. "And when I didn't find you there and heard that you had left, it broke my heart."

This made her cry because this was not what she was expecting. She didn't know that Spot felt that way about her. When she had left, her heart had broke just the same as Spot's did.

Spot gently wiped away her tears, and she smiled at him. Slowly, Spot came up to her, and gave her the kiss she had been wanting for over a year now. It was sweet and passionate as she remembered from last time. She was about to wrap her arms around him when someone cleared their throats behind them.

They pulled away, and looked back at the doorway. Race was standing in the doorway and he was holding Sherrie. He walked over, and

said,

"I think she wants her mama."

"Alright," Cathlyn said as she took her. Hugging Sherrie, Cathlyn said, "So you want your mama, huh? Well, here I am."

Spot watched Cathlyn and was curious about who the father of the baby was. So he asked,

"Uh, Cathlyn, who's the father of this little girl?"

"Well, Spot," she said. "Her father is a wonderful man. He's handsome, smart, and funny, plus he loves me a great deal."

"Where is he?"

"Oh, he's nearby," she told him.

"Ok, and who is he?"

"Well, you may have heard about him, he's the leader of the Brooklyn Newsies."

"But I'm the leader...Wait a second. Are you telling me that she's my daughter?"

"Yes, she's yours," she said as she faced Sherrie towards Spot.

"Are you sure?"

"Am I sure? Of course, I'm sure. She was born nine months after I left, and you were the only guy I've been with."

Kneeling down before his daughter, he touched her hand, and she giggled. She seemed like a happy child, and she looked a lot like Spot when he was in a good mood. Looking up at Cathlyn, he asked,

"What's her name?"

"Sherrie," she replied. "I named her after my mother."

"I like the name," he said as he smiled at her. "Can I hold her?"

Cathlyn nodded, and handed her to him. When he had her, he started walking around the room as he talked to her quietly. While they were walking, Cathlyn sat there watching them. She was seeing the two people she loved most together at last, and she didn't know if it would stay like that.

Bringing her back to Cathlyn, Spot sat down next to her, and looked at her. For a moment, neither of them spoke, then Spot asked,

"How long are you staying?"

"I'm just in town for a few days," she said sadly.

"A few days?"

"Yeah, I wanted you to meet your daughter. I thought it was time."

"Are you planning on coming back?" Spot asked

"I don't know," she replied. "I also came back to see if there was anything worth staying for."

By that time, Sherrie had fallen asleep, so Spot laid her on the next bunk, and sat down facing Cathlyn. Looking into her eyes, he asked her,

"Have you found anything worth staying for?"

She looked into his eyes, and found what she had fallen in love with so long ago. Reaching up, she gently stroked his cheek, and smiled. When she knew that the answer was going to say was the right one, she nodded her head and said,

"I believe I found a reason to stay. Now that I have you."

He leaned forward, and touching her cheek, and they kissed. When they came apart, Spot got off the bed, and dropped to one knee. Pulling a string off his neck with a key on it, he held it up to her, and said,

"I know that we still have some problems to work out, but I love you and I want us to be together forever. Will you make me the happiest man alive, and marry me?"

She nodded, and replied,

"Of course I will."

"Now, this key will have to be our sign of love until I can get you a ring," he said as he put the string around her neck. "Alright?"

Standing up, she wrapped her arms around Spot, and kissed him. When she released him, he took a step back as he tried to catch his breath. Finally about to talk, he said,

"I'll take that as a yes."

They smiled at each other, and were about to start back at it again when they heard the newsies stomping up the stairs. Separating, Spot sat on one bed, while Cathlyn sat on the other, next to the still sleeping Sherrie.

When they all came in, they saw that nothing really out of the ordinary, so they all went about their business. Race walked over and knelt on the floor by the bed that Cathlyn was sitting on because it was his bed, and he needed to get something that was under the mattress.

It wasn't until Race started to get up, when he saw what was around Cathlyn's neck. He stared at it for a second, then realized what it was. It was Spot's key! He never gave that away unless he was serious about the girl. Sitting on his bed, he looked back and forth between

Spot and Cathlyn, then asked,

"Alright, what's going on here?"

"Should we tell them?" She asked Spot with a mischievous smile.

"Tell us what?" Jack asked as he walked over to them, along with the rest of the newsies.

"I guess we're going to have to tell them, since someone blew our cover," he said as he looked at Race, but smiled.

"I guess so," Cathlyn repeated.

"So what's going on?" Race repeated his question, insistently.

"Well, if you will be patient, I will tell you," Spot said.

He got up off the bed, and stood next to Cathlyn. Holding out his hand, she took it and stood next to him, as he wrapped his arm around her waist.

"I just want to tell you that I asked Cathlyn to marry me, and she accepted."

They were all stunned for a minute. Then, the whole room erupted with noise. Everyone started to congratulate both of them. It got so noisy that it woke up Sherrie. She woke up crying, and everyone had to quiet down until she was calmed down.

Finally, she was all quiet, and everyone started talking again, but not as loud. When everyone went off to do whatever, Spot and Cathlyn sat on the bed, while she rocked Sherrie, talking. They talked about everything and anything.

Race was getting a poker game started when he heard them laughing. He looked up, and saw that both of them had smiles on their faces. Shaking his head, he chuckled and couldn't help but notice the change in Spot. When she had left, he changed overnight, now that she was back, he was back to his old self.

'This is great,' he thought. 'Spot and Cathlyn are finally together, like they should have been. They had it all along. It's just that it was hidden beneath the surface, and they had to look harder for the love they both had.'

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THE END

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End
file.